

Cargill expands support of Notre Dame Haiti Program



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Program seeks to eliminate lymphatic filariasis in Haiti

December 07, 2012, 4:52 pm -- /[EPR NETWORK](#)/ -- The Notre Dame Haiti Program and Cargill have renewed their partnership to eliminate lymphatic filariasis (LF) in Haiti.

LF, also known as elephantiasis, is a mosquito-borne disease that affects over 2 million Haitians, and is the second leading cause of long-term disfigurement and disability worldwide. LF is truly a national disease in Haiti, and 87 percent of the country is a potential risk zone. In much of coastal Haiti, as much as half of the population is infected with the parasite.

After donating salt two years ago to the Program, Cargill is now offering its technical and operations expertise in salt production. Cargill has committed \$150,000 over the next three years to the Notre Dame Haiti Program to help establish a sustainable salt-fortification venture in Haiti. The salt is fortified with potassium iodate (iodine) and diethylcarbamazine citrate (DEC) and is designed to stop LF, while also preventing Iodine Deficiency Disorder.

Salt fortified with DEC avoids the barriers associated with annual tablet-based mass treatment. For instance, DEC-fortified salt does not require a dedicated distribution infrastructure, nor is it associated with the adverse side effects (flu-like symptoms) caused by rapid death of the parasite during tablet-based mass treatment. Moreover, DEC-fortified salt can easily be incorporated into salt iodization programs. Iodine Deficiency Disorder is prevalent in Haiti, and can stunt both physical and mental development. Thus, the salt eliminates both lymphatic filariasis and addresses Iodine Deficiency Disorder.

In addition to Cargill's three-year monetary contribution, a number of current and former Cargill Salt employees will be providing production and scientific expertise. Not only will they aid in packaging and distributing the fortified salt currently being brought into Haiti, they will also help to develop the production of salt in Haiti for future use.

Jim Reimer, a recently retired vice president of Cargill Salt is contributing the first year of his retirement to the Program. Reimer notes that his involvement is simply another chance to give back, in accordance with his own belief in helping the less fortunate in the name of Jesus Christ.

"The most exciting thing is seeing doors open. All the ingredients are there," Jim said. "It's been a great way to leverage my experience, interests and faith."

In 2010, Cargill supplied 100 tons of salt (equal to about one million 3-ounce table-top shakers) from its solar operations in Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles. With Haitians preferring locally produced salt, the focus now is on domestic production, which has the additional benefit of helping the Haitian economy become more self-sustaining.

"While our past in-kind donations of salt have been tremendously helpful to the people of Haiti, improving quality of life for millions, it makes good sense to help the country invest in itself and its future by using locally produced salt," said Ruth Kimmelshue, president of Cargill Salt.

Cargill became involved in the program several years ago after program founder Father Tom Streit visited Cargill Salt for assistance in salt fortification.

"Call it serendipity, of course as a priest I want to call it Providence, but this relationship is very special," Father Tom said at the event. "This is science in the service of humanity, but it is business in the service of humanity as well. I'm so very grateful for Cargill's efforts in helping with this project."

About the Notre Dame Haiti Project

Founded in 1993, the University of Notre Dame Haiti Program seeks to eliminate lymphatic filariasis (LF) in Haiti by 2020. LF, a mosquito-borne disease, is the second leading cause of long-term disfigurement and disability worldwide. It can be eliminated through Mass Drug Administration and the distribution of co-fortified salt. The Haiti

Program is partnering with the Haitian Ministry of Health, corporations, and non-governmental organizations to forever eliminate the disease in Haiti, thus alleviating suffering, helping to grow the Haitian economy, and creating an exportable model for LF elimination throughout the developing world. For more information, please visit www.haiti.nd.edu.

About Cargill Salt and Cargill

Cargill Salt produces, packages and ships salt for the following 5 major market segment applications: agricultural, food, water conditioning, industrial and packaged ice control. Cargill makes over 1,000 different salt products/package sizes and markets national and regional brands, including Diamond Crystal® branded household consumer food and water softener salt products and Champions Choice® branded agricultural salts. Cargill is an international producer and marketer of food, agricultural, financial and industrial products and services. Founded in 1865, the privately held company employs 142,000 people in 65 countries. Cargill helps customers succeed through collaboration and innovation, and is committed to applying its global knowledge and experience to help meet economic, environmental and social challenges wherever it does business. For more information, visit www.cargill.com.

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